

## BELMONT HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Town Hall

April 7, 2004

Meeting Minutes

ATTENDING Co-chairs: Richard Cheek and Lydia Ogilby. Members: Paul Bell, Arleyn Levee, Richard Pichette, Michael Smith. Associate Members: Matthew Genta, Lisa Harrington. Absent: Carolyn Darbyshire, Linn Hobbs, Sharon Vanderslice.

### APPLICATION FOR DEMOLITION OF AN ADDITION TO 480 PLEASANT STREET

Applicant Amy Hiestand has decided to move and has withdrawn her earlier request for approval of the demolition of an old addition to her house. Instead, the applicant seeks a Certificate of Non-Applicability for a change to be made to some of her rear kitchen windows. As grounds for her request, she has noted that she does not believe that the windows are visible from a public way, and that the Commission therefore has no jurisdiction over the proposed changes. After discussion, the Commission unanimously voted to approve the request on the grounds noted.

### HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES

Lisa Harrington noted that she has partially updated her earlier draft of this document, but was waiting to receive feedback from all Commission members before finishing her revisions.

### TRAPELO ROAD CORRIDOR PROJECT PLANNING PROCESS

Matthew Genta reported on the first meeting of the Planning Board relative to the Trapelo Road Corridor Project, which he attended last month. He produced a letter he presented at that meeting in which he identified those buildings deemed worthy of preservation. At this first meeting, there was some discussion of and opposition to the idea of rezoning as commercial certain parts of Waverley Square that are presently occupied by residences. At a subsequent meeting of the Zoning Board of Appeals, this rezoning issue met with significant organized opposition, and was tabled. The Trapelo Road Project meeting members also discussed the question of altering established setbacks. No conclusion was reached. It was agreed that the only matter which will be placed before Town Meeting will be the question of rezoning the former VW site.

## PLEASANT STREET RECONSTRUCTION

It was pointed out that the Commission has yet to receive a response to its letter to the Selectmen regarding burying the cable on Pleasant Street. Selectman Will Brownsberger will be asked to respond to the Commission's request to bury the cable. Arthur Wolfson, attendee at the meeting, reported that the residents of the Snake Hill area of Pleasant Street remain opposed to the street widening and the removal of trees, especially in the Historic District.

## WAVERLEY FIRE STATION

Lisa Harrington reported on her appearance on behalf of the Commission at the recent Waverley Fire Station Re-Use Steering Committee meeting. Ms. Harrington informed the Committee as to the tax advantages a developer receives when developing a property that has been placed on the National Register, and also as to the value of placing an easement on the property. Arleyn Levee pointed out that the Rouse Company has used the tax credits that come with Register designation to great advantage.

## PRESERVATION SEMINAR

Arleyn Levee prefaced her remarks about the seminar by telling the Commission of the nomination of Lydia Ogilby for a Lifetime Preservation award. Ms. Levee passed around a sign-up sheet for members interested in assisting in various tasks connected with the seminar. She also discussed preparing in advance questions designed to lead the seminar discussion to significant issues that should be addressed. The Commission discussed means of enhancing public awareness of the event. Richard Cheek suggested contacting Linda Pinkow of the *Belmont Citizen Herald*, and Sandra Curro to inform the Town Selectmen. Ms. Levee mentioned trying to get an article into the Northwest Section of the Boston Globe, and giving meeting notices to Nancy Richards to be forwarded to other real estate professionals.

## MISCELLANEOUS

Arleyn Levee raised the question whether the Historic District Commission could, and if so should, change its name to the "Belmont Historical Commission." Ms. Levee pointed out that the appellation "Historic District Commission" is deceptive in that it suggests that the Commission's authority is limited to the geographical boundaries of the district. Richard Pichette pointed out that the Commission may be required to retain its present name by virtue of its creation pursuant to M. G.L. ch. 40C. Richard Cheek read from a portion of Article 15, which was passed in 1972, which is the Town's assent to the creation of the Commission. This Article provides that the Historic District Commission is the successor to, and inherited the powers and responsibilities of, the Belmont Historical Commission. Mr. Pichette pointed out that there is a specific section of the

Massachusetts General Laws that deals with the powers of local historical commissions and grants them some powers additional to those granted to historic district commissions.

The minutes of the meetings of February 4, 2004 and March 4, 2004 were reviewed and approved. The Commission's next meeting is Wednesday, May 5, 2004, at 7:00 p.m.

*Minutes recorded by Richard Pichette.*